

AVILA COLLEGE magazine

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'LONESOME GEORGE', Gobel, that is TO HEADLINE THE FESTIVITIES OF AVILA'S BIRTHDAY PARTY

Paul C. Reinert, S.J.
President, St. Louis University
Harry S Truman Lecture
Avila College, Kansas City
March 13, 1973



On Friday, April 27, 1973, the celebration of Avila's 57th Birthday will be held at the Plaza Inn, 45th and Main.

Ernie Mehl, Chairman for the BIG event, has announced that George Gobel will be featured entertainer for the evening of dinner . . . fun . . . and celebration. Sharing the bill with Mr. Gobel will be a performance by the Raytown South High School Jazz Band and a concert by Sister Olive Louise, President of Avila. Mr. Mehl will be master of ceremonies for the evening.

The fun will begin with cocktails at 6 p.m., dinner at 7 p.m. and entertainment during and following dinner.

Prizes . . . Food . . . Fun . . . and an evening with friends of Avila to help celebrate the 57th Birthday Anniversary are in store for those attending.

Tickets are \$15.00 per person . . . and tables of 10 are available. Invitations will be sent . . . for your convenience to order tickets or reserve a table . . . and we hope to see all of you at the Plaza Inn on the 27th of April.

"LEADERSHIP AND PLURALISM IN HIGHER EDUCATION"

Since I was honored by the invitation to deliver this year's Harry S Truman lecture last May and asked to submit the title of my dissertation last fall, President Truman's death has led me to a somewhat different emphasis than I had originally planned. As I pondered the news of his loss and followed the ceremonies in which the nation expressed its affection for the man and its grief at his passing, I drastically revised my outline for this talk. I was compelled to dwell first on the subject of leadership and particularly the quality of President Truman's leadership at some length, before proceeding to the relationship of leadership to pluralism in higher education.

I don't have to tell this audience of his fellow townsmen that America lost one of its greatest leaders when Harry S Truman was laid to rest in the courtyard of the library which stands as a memorial to his staunch spirit.

I think Winston Churchill summed up the Truman saga as succinctly as anyone ever has. It is reported that one night at dinner on the Presidential yacht Williamsburg in 1952, the war-time Prime Minister looked up from his after-dinner brandy to tell President Truman, "I must confess, sir . . . I loathed your taking the place of Franklin Roosevelt." The doughty old warrior paused, then added, "I misjudged you badly. Since that time, you, more than any other man, have saved Western civilization."

President Truman's achievements — the Marshall Plan, NATO — and his difficult decisions on the atomic bomb, Korea, the Berlin airlift — all stemmed from his view of the authority and the responsibility of the office he held, from his understanding of the role of a leader.

In his "Essays in the Public Philosophy", Walter Lippman might have been speaking for Harry Truman when he expressed his concept of the relationship between the electorate and the chief executive in a democracy. He says that, "While the electors choose the ruler, they do not own any shares in him and they have no right to com-

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Alfred J. Blasco, Chairman of Avila's Board of Trustees, will be awarded the GOLDEN TORCH OF HOPE award at a testimonial dinner April 11.

Charles Stevenson, a member of Avila's Board of Counselors, is chairman of the event which will be held in the Regency Ballroom of the Plaza Inn. Mr. Blasco is being so honored by The City of Hope, which is a national, nonsectarian, pilot medical research center providing facilities for free patient care and research and education programs in cancer and leukemia, heart and respiratory problems, diabetes, blood disorders and heredity. Because, according to Mr. Stevenson, "his service crosses every line of creed, race and economic circumstances," . . . "it is no wonder that a national organization such as The City of Hope would hear of his work and be anxious to do him honor."

All proceeds from the dinner will go to establish a medical research fellowship in Mr. Blasco's name at the City of Hope Medical Center, Duarte, California.

AVILA'S MUSIC DEPARTMENT TO PRESENT "LA BOHEME"

The Music Department of Avila College will present the opera "La Boheme" on April 5, 7, 10, 11, 12 and 14 at 8 p.m. in the Actors Laboratory Theatre, lower level of O'Rielly Hall. The production is being staged by Carl Richard Pond and is under the direction of Gaylin Thomas, instructor in Avila's Music Department. Sister M. de La Salle, coordinator of the Music Department, is production supervisor for the opera. Sister de La Salle will also be one of the accompanists.

Tickets for this production are \$1.50 for adults and \$1.00 for students. The opera by Puccini is based on the Henry Murger stories depicting student life in Paris' Latin Quarter about 1830.

Avila's Music Department students participating in this production are Gretchen Wagner, senior; Connie Lynn Ripperger, senior; Michele Coe, sophomore; Steve Redford and Father Duane Ryan. The Avila CantAvilas will also perform in the production.

Costumes are under the direction of Mrs. Pamela Thomas. Technical direction and lighting are under the supervision of two Theatre Department students . . . Don Tabberer and Tom Joyce respectively.

Reservations may be made by calling the college, 942-3204.

Mary A. Kitchin, Chairman for Campus Revisited II

Due to the popular response of last year's Campus Revisited, the Alumni Association, working with Dean Scott and the Faculty, have planned Campus Revisited II to be held on Thursday, April 5.

The idea of "instant college" has a great deal of appeal to Avila alums as well as friends of the college. The program is styled with the same format as last year: coffee and registration at 9 a.m. in O'Rielly Hall, then two sessions, from 9:30 to 10:30 with a break and the second from 11 to 12 noon.

Included in the first session this year are . . . *How To Trigger Creativity in Children* . . . Ida Feingold; Jane Adelsberger's discussion of *The Great Gatsby: A Lost Generation*; Norma Lewis . . . *Today's Conflict in Professional Nursing*; and Sister Ann Dominic Tassone, *A Pair of Rabbits and a Mathematician*. The second session will include: *Do You Cope-With or Cop-Out, Mother?* Sister Judith Schloegel; James Assad, *Theatre is the World Compressed and With Meaning*, Jean-Paul Sartre.; Sister Martha Smith, *The Decline of the American Dollar*; and Dona Neuman, *Woman's Liberation and the Family: Problems and Prospects*.

Those attending will have an opportunity to choose one from the first session and one from the second session. A Liturgical Service for 12 noon has been planned by the Religious Education Department in the Chapel. Lunch is available for those interested; the cost is \$2.50 for participants and 50¢ for children. Free baby sitting service for children two years of age or older will be provided by the college.

There will be campus tours after lunch for those interested and reserved parking for the participants in the O'Rielly parking lot.

"LEADERSHIP AND PLURALISM IN HIGHER EDUCATION"

(Continued from page 1)

mand him. His duty is to the office and not to the electors. Their duty is to fill the office and not to direct the office-holder."

On the campaign trail, "Give-Em-Hell Harry" was one of the scrappiest politicians of recent memory, with a seat-of-the-pants feeling for the voters that flew in the face of all the polls and the pundits.

In the White House, he exhibited a strong sense of the dignity and the awesome responsibility of his office with an independence seldom equaled by a President of the United States.

The columnist, Shana Alexander, in commenting on President Truman's death, said, "Of all the fond and salty anecdotes, to me the most telling was Averell Harriman's recollection that President Truman did not ask his advisors the kind of Presidential questions that are fashionable today, questions such as: What are my options? What would be most expedient? What most practical? What the most popular course? Truman asked each man only one question, and that was always the same: What do **you** think is right?"

To exercise such leadership calls for moral fibre of an exceptional order.

To respond favorably to that leadership calls for an electorate who can, at least on occasion, see beyond the narrow valley walls of their own self-interest to achieve a mountain-top view of the greater good for the state — and for the brotherhood of man.

Edmund Burke once said, "There never was for any

long time a corrupt representation of a virtuous people, or a mean, sluggish, careless people that ever had good government of any form."

Since the founding fathers this has been the overriding goal, the insistent thrust of the unique system of public-private education we have developed here in the United States — to produce, in Burke's term, "a virtuous people."

President Truman himself once said: "The fundamental purpose of our educational system is to instill a moral code in the rising generation and create a citizenship which will be responsible for the welfare of the Nation. It isn't polls or public opinion alone of the moment that counts. It is right and wrong, and leadership — men with fortitude, honesty and a belief in the right that make epochs in the history of the world."

Implicitly in President Truman's remarks is the thought that, in a democracy there must be many leaders, of various types, at different levels, in diverse walks of life, reflecting our pluralistic values, goals and styles.

We are on the verge of another epoch, and the times demand the kind of leadership of which President Truman spoke. Higher Education is challenged to provide it, while there is yet time.

The storms of crisis have a way of illuminating, even while they threaten, the path by which we have come, and the path we must take to regain our footing and continue our ascent.

In the beginning, leadership must begin at home. Napoleon said his successful leadership was based on the fact that each of his soldiers "carried a marshal's baton in his knapsack".

The current sense of drift, of rootlessness, that the times are out of joint, has many complex causes. But it is not primarily those easy scapegoats — poor leaders in business, in government who are to blame — although these contribute.

These leaders are a reflection of what I believe to be the root cause: poor leadership in each individual's very private but crucial community, his own person. And that is where, as President Truman reminds us, education is fundamentally related to leadership.

If we are to renew our nation, we must renew our citizens. The strength of America is not in the leaders but in the people.

Education at its best, and particularly higher education, has served society by serving the individual: helping him to achieve the personal balance, the skills and the values which enable him to live with purpose and meaning in cooperation with his neighbors.

But we are producing today too many graduates with purely materialistic ambitions and standards, seekers of personal power in one form or other, individuals guided by a wholly individualistic ethic that ignores the claims of their fellowmen.

True, we read much these days about the idealism of our youth and their revolt against the materialism of their fathers. But all too often, today's students react to their educational experience by either surrendering to the materialism of the establishment or dropping out of the mainstream to pursue goals that may express social concern but which are totally unrealistic, completely alien to our contemporary society.

If those of us who are responsible for shaping the future of higher education are to meet our responsibilities to the nation, I think we must move ahead on two fronts.

First we must find more effective ways of transmitting the traditions and values of our common past, the traditions and values that hold us together as a community today, the traditions and values that must be

cultivated in the future if we are to preserve the democracy our fathers bequeathed us.

Walter Lippman has observed that when the continuity of our cultural heritage is interrupted, the community is threatened. Unless the rupture is repaired, the community will break down into factional, class, racial and regional wars. "The art of governing well," he says, "has to be learned. If it is to be learned, it has to be transmitted from the old to the young, and the habits and the ideas must be maintained as a seamless web of memory among the bearers of the traditional generation after generation."

This is no easy challenge in these days of skeptical materialism. Regrettably, there has been a loss of faith by many of our young in culture and enlightenment because they've discovered that the two can co-exist with war, savagery, bigotry, greed, poverty and selfishness. Many have come to believe that our cultural traditions are not worth reaching out for. We must find ways of convincing them that all is lost if they fail to reach — and to grasp those traditions.

In past generations, it has been largely the elitist colleges of liberal arts which have preserved and transmitted our cultural traditions. In the earlier days of the Republic, when our leadership was drawn primarily from a small elitist class, this worked. Today it will no longer suffice.

In the United States today we have reached the stage where the elite have become the majority. Despite deplorable pockets of poverty, perhaps the most important sociological fact about the United States is that most people belong to Galbraith's "Affluent Society".

In a paper titled "Education 2000 A.D.," Professor Paul Nash of Boston University reports that many educational theorists are exploring the "bold notion" that a humanist education of the quality hitherto confined to a privileged minority can be enjoyed by almost everyone. Therein lies our hope of an educated citizenry.

In practical terms, what does this mean?

"Already we can see the shape of the future in the lives of the affluent young," says Professor Nash. "They are largely emancipated from the 'production problem' attitudes of their parents (how to make a living, fear of an economic depression, 'getting ahead', etc.) But they are beset in a most serious way by choice problems. Life faces them with a bewilderingly rich and complex array of alternatives. In a society that is so affluent that there is almost nothing that a young person **has** to do, it requires great character strength to resolve that **anything** is **worth** doing.

"This brings us to an important educational inference. To be relevant to the needs of such young people, schooling will have to be much more explicitly concerned with values than it is today. Instead of preparing people to take their places obediently on production lines (which will no longer be operated by people), schools will have to prepare them to be superior decision makers, through experiences that enhance their self-knowledge, help them to clarify their own values, and enable them to understand the social consequences of their choices."

So this, in my opinion, is the first of the two fronts on which we must move ahead — towards educating our citizenry at every level and in every segment of our society to develop their own individual values and to relate those values effectively with the values and traditions of the community.

The second front on which we must move is towards helping every student at every level find the vocation which best fits his abilities and his aspirations, whether that be carpentry, accounting or exploring the frontiers of astrophysics. John Gardner said quite the same thing

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in a memorable passage from his book, *Excellence*, and I quote:

"The society which scorns excellence in plumbing because plumbing is a humble activity and tolerates shoddiness in philosophy because it is an exalted activity will have neither good plumbing nor good philosophy. Neither its pipes nor its theories will hold water."

Thus, using the classic definition of "vocation," I would say that all education, even unto the doctoral level, should be vocational. Show me a man who is happy with the job he is doing, who believes that doing that job well makes a difference to himself and a difference to his fellowman — and I will show you an enlightened citizen, a potential leader with "a marshall's baton in his knapsack". Call this a simplistic statement of an old-fashioned, outmoded work ethic if you will, but I firmly believe that no man can be fully realized until he has found his particular vocation and has been given an opportunity to fulfill it.

If we are to achieve the two basic goals I have proposed — a chance for every man to acquire a feeling for our common cultural heritage and a chance to discover and pursue his special vocation — the need for more open access to every level of our educational system and the need for an even greater variety of options within that system becomes obvious. The need for a pluralistic system of education to serve our pluralistic society in ways that will advance the common good seems clear.

Speaking for the higher education component of our total educational system, I must admit that many, if not most, of our institutions in both the private and public sectors grew fat and lazy during the affluent sixties. Too many of us, without regard for our own particular constituency, were aiming at the same elitist goals. Our ambition was to achieve recognition as the "Harvard" of our community, or state, or section of the country. The result has all too often been, as the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education has pointed out, "a dull conformity" and "the meanest kind of an overstatement of petty competition" (between institutions). Most important, this trend towards homogenization in higher education has resulted in far less meaningful service to students and society as each institution tries to climb higher up a single, greasy pole of success.

If the post-secondary educational establishment, from proprietary vocational schools to doctoral granting universities, is to meet its challenge to produce future gen-

erations of graduates with a sure sense of citizenship and vocation, it is obvious that each individual institution must develop a clear definition of its own particular mission.

This can require some painful decisions.

At the institution I serve, St. Louis University, the financial facts of life forced us to bite the bullet several years ago. First we closed our dental school; then we phased out our engineering programs. At the direction of our trustees, we then set out to redesign our curriculum to focus on "the nature of man and his environment including its social implications, entrusting the area of applied technology, important as it is, to other agencies and institutions."

I am convinced that that decision saved us from mediocrity if not from bankruptcy. In the future we will be doing fewer things but doing them better. We will be meeting those community needs we are best equipped by our talents and traditions to meet, leaving other tasks to other hands.

These are times of ferment and change in higher education as in every segment of our society. The post-World War II epoch for which President Truman, more than any other man, set the tone and defined the goals is drawing to a close. A new chapter in our history is being written.

Our hope for survival depends on the emerging leadership from the ranks of the common man rather than the traditional elite. In equal measure it depends on an electorate that understands and embraces our cultural heritage, an electorate composed of many individuals of diverse abilities and interests who have discovered their particular, unique vocation.

I have a comfortable feeling that both President Truman, the leader, and "Give-Em-Hell-Harry", the campaigner, would agree with my conclusions.

Calendar of Events

- April 5 Campus Revisited II — Avila Campus
- April 15 Medal of Honor Society Dinner — on Campus
- April 27 Avila Birthday Party — Plaza Inn — George Gobel — Featured Entertainer
- May 16 Alumni Bridge Marathon Play-Offs — On Campus

ALUMNI NEWS

WEDDINGS

CLASS '71

Marianne Fadden, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Fadden, Jr., to Gary Hudlemeyer on March 3 at Christ the King Church, Kansas City, Missouri.

CLASS '72

Sherry Schiltz, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John O. Schlitz, to John T. Ryan on June 2 at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Raytown, Missouri.

CLASS '73

Jane Ann Miller, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Miller

(**Margaret Hix '35**), to Melvin Finlay on December 30 at St. Regis Church, Kansas City, Missouri.

Kathleen Marie Stack, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Matthew I. Stack, Sr., to Eugene Leonard Coenen on June 24 at St. Casimir Church, St. Louis, Missouri.

CLASS '74

Christine Therese Morgan, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John A. Morgan, to Gary Lee Comstock on December 30 at Visitation Church, Kansas City, Missouri.